

SB0609 through 0615

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, all the Sponsors of the Bills, and Senate Leaders:

The Driver Responsibility Act has been a disaster for Michigan. It has ruined the financial, social and employment lives of several hundred thousand citizens. Experience in other states with similar laws made it certain to be such a disaster before the Act became law. The National Motorists Association (NMA) testified against the bill to create the Act in 2003, citing the many negatives experienced in New Jersey, New York and other states - but our warnings were not heeded. The NMA knew this would have to end this way from the day it was introduced.

When the Senate committee reported the original bill out to the Senate floor, Senator Burton Leland mumbled: "*another victory for white people*", meaning the burdens would fall heavily on minorities in our big cities and that became true. What was poorly understood at the time was the burdens fell equally heavily on people of all races living in rural areas and small towns where a car is necessary for work, and for many people a car is necessary to even buy food.

The first hearing on the results of this wrongful law was held on December 13, 2006 before a Driver Responsibility Subcommittee of the House Transportation Committee, chaired by Representative Pearce. Four judges, the NMA and many citizens testified to the terrible consequences of the Act and pleaded for full repeal of the law. Representative Pearce apologized "*for creating a monster we need to fix*". Representative Casperson said "*I apologize for what the legislature has done*". Several people then and since have likened the effects of the Act to that of putting people into a Debtors' Prison.

The NMA, several judges, and many officials have testified in at least six public hearings and other forums on the Act asking for total repeal and forgiveness of all the outstanding debts. We all know that most of these debts will never be paid because the people are too poor to ever pay them, so carrying the debts on the books as a collectible asset is completely unrealistic. Some parts of the law were made less damaging over the years and in 2014 a phased sunset of the law passed, but without forgiveness of all the debts.

Finally, almost eleven years after that 2006 hearing where the disasters of the Act became clear, we have sets of bills in the Senate and the House to accomplish a total repeal and forgiveness of all the outstanding debts.

The state's business community has realized the damage that this law is doing to the state's economy. Over 300,000 people, mostly of productive age, have been essentially taken out of the state's labor force because they have no legal way to travel to participate in the money economy. These bills will help the recovery of our Michigan economy, and will have a positive dynamic effect on the state budget.

The National Motorists Association urges that these Senate bills be rapidly reported out and passed without amendment, to become law to totally end the fourteen year tragedy of the Driver Responsibility Act.

Respectfully submitted,

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Senators Hildenbrand, Emmons, O'Brien, and Schuitmaker are receiving copies via their web forms.